

WEST ANTELOPE VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 1972
LANCASTER, CA 93539

September 12, 2012

LOS ANGELES COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
HISTORICAL LANDMARKS AND RECORDS COMMISSION
500 W. Temple Street, Room B50
Los Angeles, CA 90012

To Whom it May Concern:

We will be filing an Application for Nomination of a Resource to the California Register of Historical Resources with the California Office of Historic Preservation. We are nominating our Leona Valley Schoolhouse for registration as a California Point of Historical Interest. A copy of the Application is enclosed.

Your agency previously determined, in 1999, that this structure was worthy of designation as a California Point of Historical Interest. A copy of the Recommendation to the Board of Supervisors is enclosed. The significance of the Leona Valley Schoolhouse is substantiated by its association with early settlement and development of education in Southern California. Among the "homesteader-boom" era schools, this structure is the only one in the north county region dating from that era still standing which reflects the Victorian "little red schoolhouse" vernacular tradition. The building will be used as an interpretive tool within a museum setting, making it imperative that the original structure be preserved as completely as possible. This designation would bring it under the purview of the State Historic Building Code and enable us to protect this valuable local historical resource.

After the Board of Supervisors approved the previous Application, it was forwarded to the State Office of Historic Preservation. They declined it due to the use of improper forms. Our Society is now resubmitting the Application.

We understand that you have 90 days to provide written comments on the Application before we file it with the state. Please send your comments to the undersigned at the above address.

Thank you for your consideration,



Peggy Fuller
WAVHS Grant Committee
(661) 270-0771

State of California - The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION

☐

CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL LANDMARK
(Results in automatic listing in the California Register)

☒

CALIFORNIA POINT OF HISTORICAL INTEREST

NAME OF HISTORIC PROPERTY
LEONA VALLEY SCHOOLHOUSE

ADDRESS
8367 Elizabeth Lake Road

CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE
Leona Valley, CA 93551

COUNTY
Los Angeles

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO.
3205 006 010

NAME OF OWNER OF HISTORIC PROPERTY
West Antelope Valley Historical Society

ADDRESS
P.O. Box 1972

CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE
Lancaster, CA 93539

NAME OF APPLICANT
West Antelope Valley Historical Society

APPLICANT TELEPHONE NO.
(661) 270-0771

ADDRESS
P.O. Box 1972

CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE
Lancaster, CA 93539

RECOMMENDED BY CHAIR, STATE HISTORICAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

DATE

APPROVED BY DIRECTOR, CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

DATE

DESIGNATION NO.

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary #
HRI #
Trinomial
NRHP Status Code

Other Listings
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

Page 1 of 9

*Resource Name or #: LEONA VALLEY SCHOOLHOUSE

P1. Other Identifier:

*P2. Location: ☐ Not for Publication ☒ Unrestricted
and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

*a. County: Los Angeles

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad: Sleepy Valley

Date: 1995 T 6N ; R 13W; Section 3

c. Address: 8367 Elizabeth Lake Road City: Leona Valley

Zip: 93551

d. UTM: Zone: 10 ; mE/ mN (G.P.S.)

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate) Elevation: Assessor's ID #3205 006 010

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

The Leona Valley Schoolhouse is a typical early 20th century one-room schoolhouse. It is a vernacular style one-story wood frame building with one large room where students of all ages and grade levels would receive their education from one teacher. It was originally built in a T-shaped plan with the nearly square schoolroom measuring 27' x 30'6". This portion was fronted by a vestibule providing access and also used as a cloakroom. It had redwood framing with triple-tiered 3" clapboard siding and wood trim. It had a three bay front, horizontal siding, and an asphalt shingle gable roof. It sat on a concrete foundation.

The gable roof of the vestibule supported a hip-roofed open cupola that served as a bell tower. The gable end of the vestibule was decorated with ornamental wood molding. Both the cornice/eave ends and the peaks of the vestibule and classroom gable ends were fitted with ornamental brackets. The three gables had narrow barge boards on the roof ends while rafters were exposed on the eaves. Each had slatted vents below the ridge boards. A horizontal wooden molding band at the base of the gable in the two classroom gable ends separated two different widths of horizontal siding. The upper areas of these gable ends appear to have originally been painted a darker color than the lower.

The vestibule portion of the building had two double-hung windows flanking the double door entryway at the gable end. An additional double-hung window was installed in each of the side walls of the vestibule. The classroom portion of the structure had similar windows flanking the vestibule on the entryway side of the structure as well as two double-hung windows on the left-hand gable end. The opposite side had no windows due to the interior positioning of a painted blackboard. There were two sets of three double-hung windows on the back wall of the building. The original color of the schoolhouse was bright yellow with a red roof.

The building was plain in that it lacked much exterior ornamentation and was quite utilitarian. This carried over to the interior which was simply one large room. The ceiling and interior walls were lath and plaster on the upper portion with wood wainscoting on the lower level. The floors were hardwood. As mentioned above, there was a blackboard along one entire side of the building that consisted of black paint on plaster. Heating was provided by a single cast-iron burning stove. Kerosene lamps lit the interior prior to the advent of electricity.

The Schoolhouse has been moved onto a new concrete block basement for its foundation. It remains in fair condition for its age with most of its original components intact. Los Angeles County building inspectors have rated it structurally sound. Most of the changes are a result of age, weather, or overall lack of maintenance. The front of the Schoolhouse was altered by removal of the cloakrooms when it was moved from its original location in about 1938. The gable end facade of the vestibule was telescoped back onto the facade of the classroom portion of the building. The cupola was also removed at that time. The center gable roof is now covered in newer asphalt shingles with the gable ends sheathed in wood shakes. The exterior paint has deteriorated and is missing in many places. The windows were removed for safekeeping and will be replaced. The openings are presently covered with plywood for protection.

The interior is in good condition except that most of the plaster was removed from the walls and ceiling to reduce the overall weight when the building was moved to its present location. The blackboard plaster remains intact. The floor and wainscoting are relatively undamaged. Wiring was installed for lighting at some early time and will be replaced. The restoration plan for the schoolhouse includes the restoration and repositioning of this facade back to its original location at the gable end of the reconstructed vestibule. The cupola will also be reconstructed.

The schoolhouse is located on a four-acre property owned by the Leona Valley Improvement Association, a local nonprofit group which maintains a community building for the use of residents. The Community Building was assembled from two WWII barracks joined together in the 1950's and retains its original rural feel. Adjacent to the Schoolhouse is a relatively new building designed to look like a "big red barn" and used as a museum for local artifacts. Part of the Museum is an open shed which houses equipment from the early local wine industry. Both the Museum and Schoolhouse are maintained by the West Antelope Valley Historical Society which has a 99-year lease from the Leona Valley Improvement Association. There are numerous trees on the property and around the schoolhouse which sits at the top of the hilly rural property.

PRIMARY RECORD

Page 2 of 9

Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) LEONA VALLEY SCHOOLHOUSE

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) (HP15) Educational Building

*P4. Resources Present: ☒ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐ District ☐ Element of District ☐ Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5a. Photo or Drawing (Photo required for buildings, structures, and objects.)



P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #) Figure 1. Front and west side of Leona Valley Schoolhouse, Peggy Fuller 4/19/2012

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources: ☒ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both Estimated date of construction is 1915, based on research of County School District records.

*P7. Owner and Address: West Antelope Valley Historical Society, P.O. Box 1972, Lancaster, CA 93539-1972

*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address) Peggy Fuller, West Antelope Valley Historical Society, P.O. Box 1972, Lancaster, CA 93539-1972

*P9. Date Recorded: July 1, 2012

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe) California Register nomination

*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.") None

*Attachments: ☐ NONE ☐ Location Map ☐ Sketch Map ☒ Continuation Sheet ☒ Building, Structure, and Object Record
☐ Archaeological Record ☐ District Record ☐ Linear Feature Record ☐ Milling Station Record ☐ Rock Art Record
☐ Artifact Record ☐ Photograph Record ☐ Other (List):
 DPR 523A (1/95)

*Required information

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

Primary #
HRI#

Page 3 of 9

*NRHP Status Code 7

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) LEONA VALLEY SCHOOLHOUSE

B1. Historic Name: Leona Valley Schoolhouse
B2. Common Name: Old Leona Valley Schoolhouse
B3. Original Use: Educational

B4. Present Use: Vacant

*B5. Architectural Style: Vernacular

*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations) Built about 1915, vestibule and cupola removed about 1938.

*B7. Moved? ☐ No ☒ Yes ☐ Unknown Date: 1938

Original Location: Southeast corner of Elizabeth Lake Road and Bouquet Canyon Road.

*B8. Related Features:

B9a. Architect: Unknown

b. Builder: Unknown, probably local ranchers

Area: Leona Valley

*B10. Significance: Theme: One-room schoolhouse

Period of Significance: 1915-1938

Property Type: One-room schoolhouse

Applicable Criteria: 1, 2, and 3

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

The Leona Valley Schoolhouse is significant as one of the last representative intact examples of early 20th century country one-room schoolhouses in the rural areas of Los Angeles County. It is eligible for the California Register under Criterion 1 as it is associated with events which have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of regional history, namely, the development of the rural public school system. Schools in the Antelope Valley area of Los Angeles County started being built in the late 1800s, each with its own school district. These districts were eventually consolidated in the 1940s due to the population growth in Antelope Valley. The ceding of local community control to larger and less localized districts and boards spelled the demise of the one-room schoolhouse.

The Schoolhouse reflects in its history a whole pioneer community way of life swept away by World War II and its aftermath. In the era of its use, local face-to-face social activities, such as, dances, prayer meetings, and improvement group meetings were centered there in a community where everyone literally knew everyone else. The school was the community and, like the community, was an expression of grass-roots values, local autonomy, and local responsibility. Today it expresses not only the architectural vernacular of its time and place, but also the self-conscious rural and pioneer values of that last era of homesteading from 1910 through the 1930s. This was an era when those frontier values were combined with a Progressive Era belief in populism and technical improvement, both of which are reflected in the schoolhouse.

In addition, the Schoolhouse is associated with events which have made a significant contribution to the local history, as it represents the beginnings of Leona Valley as a community of people rather than simply a place where ranchers herded their cattle and sheep. It served not only an educational function, but was also Leona Valley's community center. It was a local meeting place for cultural, political, and religious events. These included elections, town hall meetings, community dances, and other social events. Like other schools of the era before World War II, it defined rural identity and social life. The role of social activities, such as, dances and parties in bringing pioneer neighbors together on Saturday nights was particularly important. In addition, the community school district board was composed of many of the local ranchers. The board was responsible for running the school, keeping it maintained, and hiring and paying the teachers. As the principal local elected political body, it functioned as the local government and reflected civic identity.

The Leona Valley Schoolhouse is also eligible for the California Register under Criterion 3 since it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, namely, one-room schoolhouses. It is a unique example of public architecture. It represents an interesting and unique vernacular expression combining several architectural styles and traditions. It reflects a popular nineteenth century American tradition of one room school construction that can be traced back through much of the Victorian era. The vestibule with its gable end facade and the bell cupola clearly mark the building as influenced by this traditional style which, by 1915, was clearly wrapped in considerable popular nostalgia. During this decade, a homesteading boom in the Antelope Valley brought the construction of a number of one room schools. This was the last wave of building of this school type in northern Los Angeles County. Among these homestead-boom era schools, this structure perhaps most clearly reflected the Victorian "little red schoolhouse" tradition. Other local schoolhouses were built in a similar style, as exemplified by the still existing Old Palmdale Schoolhouse located in the nearby city of Palmdale. Nearly all of the other original small schoolhouses in the Antelope Valley area have been demolished.

The construction style of the Schoolhouse was also clearly influenced by new genres of residential and other architectural styles established in California by the decade of the teens. The development of the California bungalow style within the Arts and Crafts movement brought new building features to California by this time. These included the use of exposed rafters, flatter gabled roofs, and plain wood cornice/cave brackets. This influence of bungalow and other current urban style features is echoed in the Schoolhouse structure. It includes use of exposed rafters and plain wood decorative brackets, decorative molding on the vestibule facade, and gable-face vents for the shallow attic. It can also be seen in a slight flattening of the roof gable in comparison with Victorian practice, and the dividing of the classroom gable ends into upper and lower areas, each with different paint tones and siding types. These influences were combined with more traditional stylistic notions by local builders to create a uniquely expressive rural structure. This amalgam of styles expressed the mix of rural pioneer ethos and southern California urban experience that was so characteristic of many local settlers in the teens.

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

Page 4 of 9

Resource Name or #* (Assigned by recorder) LEONA VALLEY SCHOOLHOUSE

Antelope Valley is the northernmost portion of Los Angeles County. It is generally described as the high desert area with surrounding foothills in the San Gabriel Mountains. It has always been rural and agricultural. Leona Valley is one of the small communities located in the foothills at about 3500' elevation. It was created by the San Andreas Fault which runs through the center of town. Elizabeth Lake Road, a two-lane street, is the main highway and runs along the fault line. The schoolhouse was originally built at the intersection of Elizabeth Lake Road and Bouquet Canyon Road, approximately one mile from the valley center. The Leona Valley Schoolhouse is now located about one-half mile further west on Elizabeth Lake Road.

The valley was called Leonis Valley in the late 1800s, named after Miguel Leonis who owned about 7,000 acres in the area. He was known as the "King of Calabasas" and was the third richest man in California, with land holdings throughout the San Fernando Valley and into Ventura County. He used the Leona Valley area to run his cattle and sheep. In the 1880s, German, Swiss, and Mexican settlers started homesteading large tracts for the purpose of ranching. The first families in Leona Valley were the Ritters, Goddes, Andrades, and Munz. Although from varied backgrounds, they shared a keen awareness of the value of education. The one room schoolhouses they built with their own hands were monuments to the frontier ideal of individual freedom and opportunity. This could only be realized if a person could read and write and had at least the rudiments of an education.

The first schoolhouse in Leona Valley was built about 1880 and the Leonis School District was formed in 1895. Over the next few years, small schoolhouses were built in various places to serve the ranch children. About 1907, Frederick Goode, one of the local pioneers, donated property for a larger schoolhouse. This property was located on the southeast corner of the intersection of Elizabeth Lake Road and Bouquet Canyon Road. A school was built there at that time and functioned until the Leona Valley Schoolhouse replaced it sometime around 1915. Research of the County School District records was done in the 1960s by Naomi Darr Spangenberg (a long time Leona Valley resident). Her research revealed that the Leona Valley Schoolhouse was built by local volunteers for a sum of \$1500. The older building was then converted into a horse barn for the use of the students. The Leona Valley Schoolhouse building served until 1938 when, again, a larger school was needed for the expanding population. A new schoolhouse (with indoor restrooms) was built on the same property and was in use until 1965, reputed to be the last active one-room schoolhouse in Los Angeles County.

After 1938, the Schoolhouse continued to have a useful presence in the community. It was moved to Ritter Park, approximately one-half mile away. The Ritter brothers were area pioneers who owned more than 15,000 acres on which they ranched and farmed. They used the building as a gun club which hosted many Hollywood stars visiting the area to hunt and fish. This pattern of movement and reuse of wood frame structures was quite typical of desert and desert-margin communities. With the tradition of boom and bust in mining and agriculture, it was not unusual for settlements to move. Large wagons pulled by mule teams were used to move frame structures from place to place as their use changed.

After 50 years at the Ritter Park location, the Leona Valley Schoolhouse was threatened with demolition when developers bought the property. The West Antelope Valley Historical Society raised funds to build a foundation and move the structure to its present site, which is closer to the original site. It was successfully moved by trailer and placed on the new foundation in 1989. The Museum located adjacent to the Schoolhouse contains many period artifacts removed from the Ritter Ranch property, including wine presses and other farming equipment. The Museum also exhibits local Native American artifacts. The Historical Society plans to use the schoolhouse as an interpretive center and conduct tours for schoolchildren to demonstrate education as it was a century ago. The designation of Historical Status would allow the use of the State Historic Building Code, allowing for faithful restoration and preservation of the original historic fabric of the structure.

Despite the obvious changes to the Leona Valley Schoolhouse and its surroundings, the building has not lost its overall integrity. It maintains integrity of design since the overall floor plan remains primarily unchanged. No additions disturb the building's original design, inside or out. The Schoolhouse retains the feel of the original workmanship, and has changed naturally over time. The setting is still quite rural and recalls the rural, agricultural life of the area.

(This space reserved for official comments.)

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

Page 5 of 9

Resource Name or #* (Assigned by recorder) LEONA VALLEY SCHOOLHOUSE

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) (HP15) Educational Building

***B12. References:**

Gordon, J. Shelton, "1990 Incredible Tales, Stories, Reminiscences of Some of the South Antelope Valley Pioneers", Antelope Valley History, Vol.3, No.1, West Antelope Valley Historical Society

Leona Valley Welcome Book, Sertoma, 2002

Miller, John, "Leona Valley Schoolhouse relocated", Antelope Valley Press, May 17, 1989

Spangenberg, Naomi Darr, "History of Leona Valley Schoolhouses", 1965

Sutton, William J., "History of Leona Valley", 1965

B13. Remarks: A previous Application for California Point of Historical Interest was submitted in 1999. It was approved by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on or about June 1, 1999. It was forwarded to the State Historical Resource Commission. The application was withdrawn due to the use of incorrect forms. It is now being resubmitted.

***B14. Evaluator:** Peggy Fuller

***Date of Evaluation:** July 1, 2012

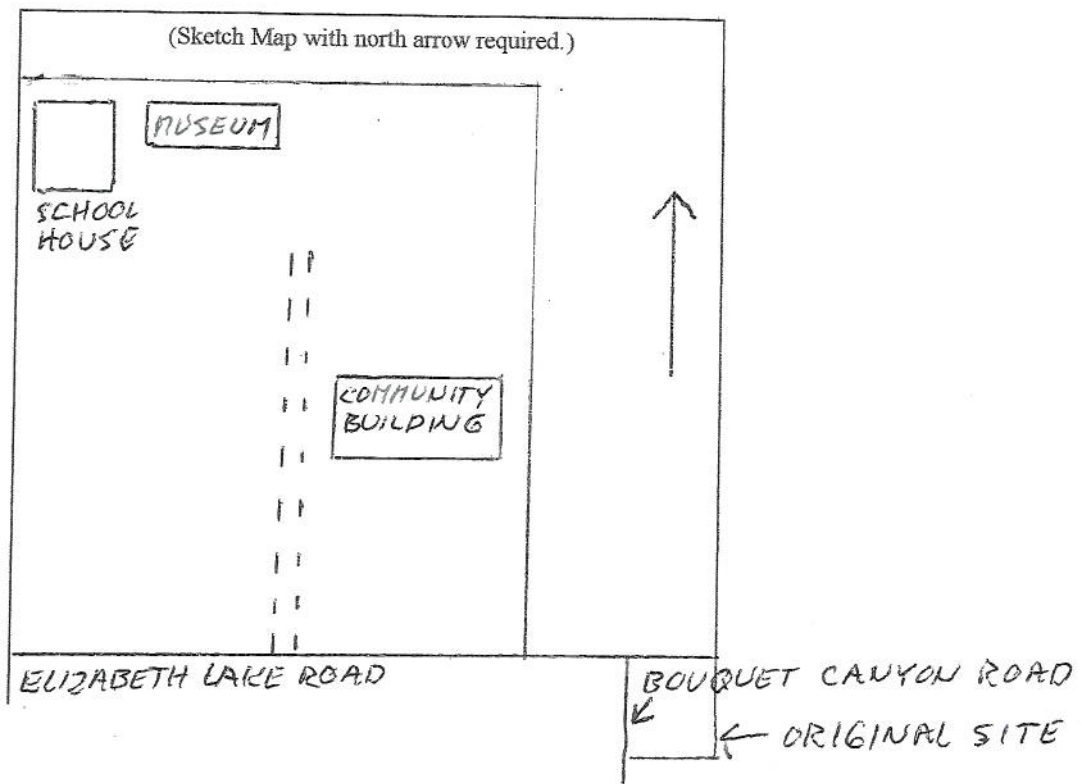




Figure 2. East side of Leona Valley Schoolhouse with sign, 4/19/2012, Peggy Fuller

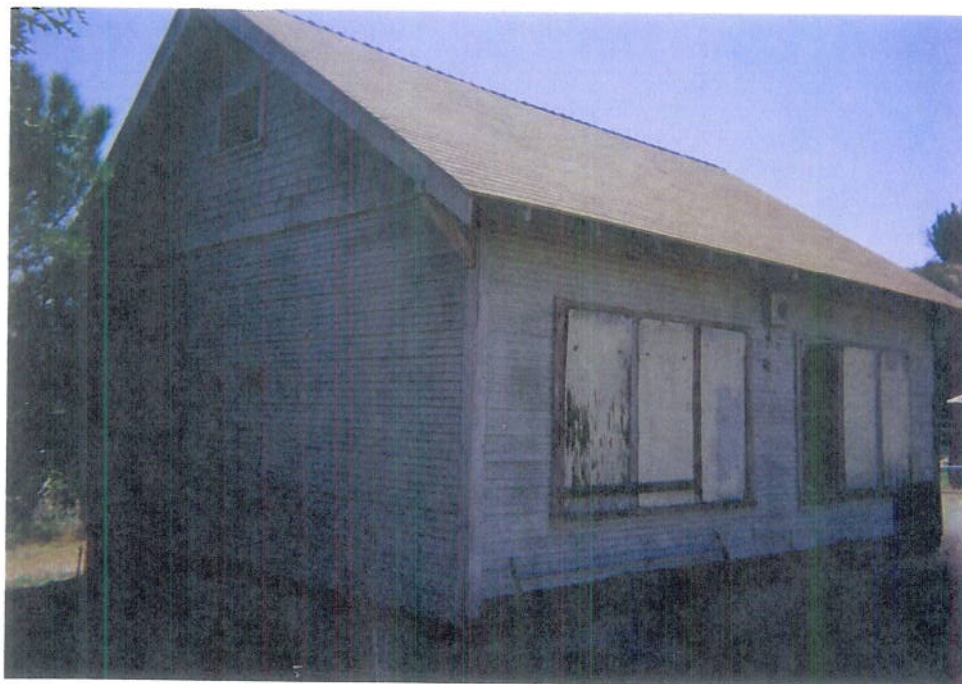


Figure 3. Back (North side) of Leona Valley Schoolhouse, 4/19/2012, Peggy Fuller



Figure 4. Leona Valley Schoolhouse at original site, North side, unknown date or photographer

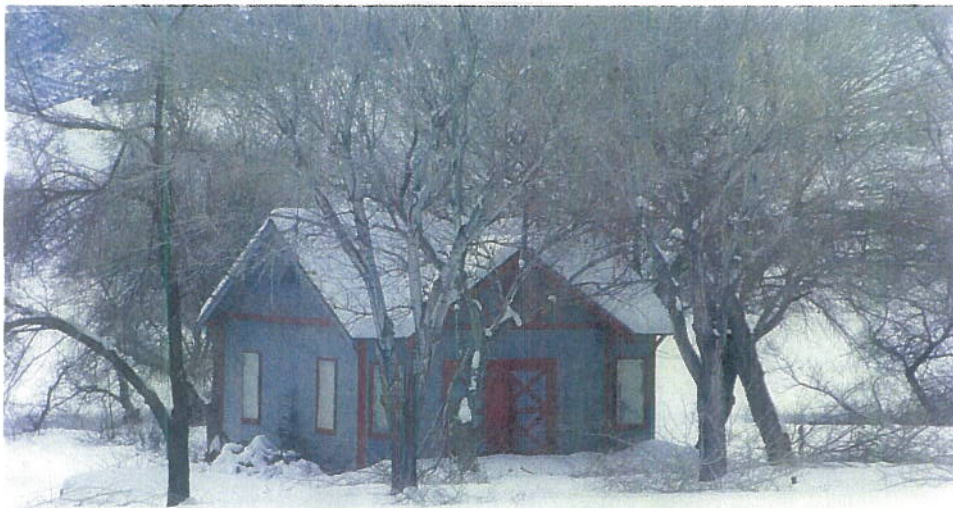


Figure 5. Leona Valley Schoolhouse at Ritter Ranch site, after 1938, unknown date or photographer



B.A.

LEONA SCHOOL 1938 TEACHER MARTHA FORTH

R/E
-2

BACK ROW	MIDDLE ROW	FRONT ROW
1. Pete Ritter	1. Betty Ritter	1. Ralph Ritter
2. <i>W. Teek</i>	2. Valeria Brown	2. <i>Ronald Jones</i>
3.	3. Catherine Binder	3. <i>C. Teek</i>
4. Bob Lubby	4. Frank Binder	<i>CA OF</i>
5. Barbara Haller	5. Martha Forth	
6. Loren Ritter	6. <i>Jerry Teek</i>	
7. <i>Johnny Ritter</i>	7. Rosemary Binder	
	8. Jay Ritter	

Figure 6. Leona Valley Schoolhouse with last attending class of students, 1938, unknown photographer



Figure 7. Leona Valley Schoolhouse at Ritter Ranch site, on top of partial underground structure, showing back of schoolhouse, unknown date or photographer

Leona Valley Improvement Association

P.O. Box 783

Leona Valley, CA 93551

September 12, 2012

W.A.V. HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 1972

Lancaster, CA 93539

Re: Leona Valley Schoolhouse

To Whom it May Concern:

The LVIA has reviewed your Application for Nomination of a Resource to the California Register of Historical Resources. As the owner of the property where the Leona Valley Schoolhouse is located, we are pleased to give our support and consent to such Nomination. That portion of the property used by your organization for the Schoolhouse and Museum has been leased to your organization for a term of 99 years. The lease is memorialized by a Letter of Agreement signed in 1988 which provides for a payment of \$1 per year, but which was paid in full at the time of the agreement.

Sincerely,



Richard Thomas

President, LVIA

May 6, 1999

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 west Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**OLD LEONA SCHOOLHOUSE MUSEUM RESTORATION PROJECT,
APPLICATION FOR CALIFORNIA POINT OF HISTORICAL INTEREST
DISTRICT 5 (3 VOTES)**

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

1. Approve the application and recommend the registration of the Old Leona Valley Schoolhouse as a CALIFORNIA POINT OF HISTORICAL INTEREST; and
2. Instruct the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors to sign the application; and
3. Instruct the Executive Officer of the Board to forward an approved copy of this Board letter with the application to the State Historical Resources Commission.

PURPOSE OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Leona Valley Town Council President and the West Antelope Valley Historical Society applied to have the schoolhouse and the grounds immediately adjacent designated as a California Point of Historical Interest. Point of Historical Interest designation is important as a means of including the structure under the purview of the State Historic Building code. It would enable the preservation and protection of a local historical resource, which the Commission encourages and supports.

JUSTIFICATION

The Historical Landmarks and Records Commission determined that the project was worthy of designation as a California Point of Historical Interest. Its local historical significance is substantiated by its association with early settlement and development in Southern California.

Among the Homesteader-boom era schools, this structure is the only one in the north County region dating from that era still standing which reflects the Victorian A little red schoolhouse vernacular tradition. The building will be used as an interpretive tool within a museum setting, making it imperative that the original structure be preserved as completely as possible.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

There will be no fiscal impact on the County of Los Angeles.

FACTS AND PROVISIONAL /LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The Los Angeles County Historical Landmarks and Records Commission's review was conducted at a properly noticed, public meeting in the Hahn Hall of Administration. There were no protests to the recommended action.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

Designation of the Old Leona Valley Schoolhouse as a California Point of Historical Interest will have no impact on current County services, programs and/or projects.

CONCLUSION

Please return and Aadopt @ stamped copy of this letter to Commission Services Division of the Executive Office of the Board of Supervisors.

Respectfully Submitted,

Louis Skelton
Chairman, Los Angeles County
Historical Landmarks and Records Commission

attachment (application)

3. Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel